

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An information processing apparatus for communicating with an external device which displays received image data, comprising:

means for receiving an interrupt request from the external device during the external device is displaying the received image data from the information processing apparatus, the interrupt request indicating that the external device received an image-data transmission request from another information processing apparatus; and

means for instructing the external device whether or not to allow shifting a transmission source transmitting the image data to the external device from the information processing apparatus to the other information processing apparatus when the receiving means received the interrupt request.

2. An information processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising means for inquiring of the user of the information processing apparatus about whether or not to allow shifting the transmission sources, when the interrupt request has been received by the receiving means and before operation of the instructing means.

3. An information processing apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising means for setting the operation mode of the instruction means to either one of a first mode for performing an inquiry by the inquiring means and a second mode for instructing the external device to prohibit the shift of the transmission source without performing the inquiry by the inquiring means.

4. An information processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

means for storing information for identifying the other information processing apparatus designated by the interrupt request whenever the interrupt request is received by the receiving means at least during the communication with the external device;

means for displaying the list of the stored identifying information on a display of the information processing apparatus; and

means for selecting one identifying information from the list as the next transmission source.

5. An information processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the instruction means includes means for transmitting the information to allow shifting the transmission source and the selected identifying information to the external device, when the one identifying information is selected by the selecting means.

6. A method for controlling the transmission of image data from an information processing apparatus to an external device which displays received image data, comprising the steps of:

transmitting image data displayed by the external device to the external device;

receiving an interrupt request from the external device at least during the communication with the external device, the interrupt request indicating that the external device received an image-data transmission request from another information processing apparatus; and

in response to the interrupt request, instructing the external device whether or not to allow shifting a transmission source transmitting the image data to the external device from the information processing apparatus to the other information processing apparatus.

7. A method for controlling the transmission of image data according to claim 6, further comprising the step of inquiring of the user of the information processing apparatus about whether or not to allow shifting the transmission sources, when the interrupt request has been received and before the instructing step.

8. A method for controlling the transmission of image data according to claim 7, further comprising the step of setting the operation mode of the instruction step to either one of a first mode for performing an inquiry in the inquiring step and a second mode for instructing the external device to prohibit the shift of the transmission sources without the inquiry in the inquiring step.

9. A method for controlling the transmission of image data according to claim 6, further comprising the steps of:

storing information for identifying the other information processing apparatus designated by the interrupt request whenever the interrupt request is received in the receiving step at least during the communication with the external device;

displaying the list of the stored identifying information on the display of the information processing apparatus; and

selecting one identifying information from the list as the next transmission source.

10. A method for controlling the transmission of image data according to claim 9, wherein the instructing step includes the step of transmitting the information instructing shifting the transmission source and the selected identifying information to the external device, when the one identifying information is selected in the selecting step.

11. An information processing apparatus for communicating with an external device which displays received image data, comprising:

means for receiving an interrupt request from the external device, the interrupt request indicating that the external device received an image-data presentation request from another information processing apparatus; and

means, responsive to said interrupt request, for instructing the external device whether or not to allow display of image data from the other information processing apparatus.

12. An information processing apparatus according to claim 11, further comprising means, responsive to said interrupt request, for inquiring of the user of the information processing apparatus about whether or not to allow display of image data from the other information processing apparatus before instructing the external device whether or not to allow display of image data from the other information processing

apparatus.

13. An information processing apparatus according to claim 12, further comprising means for setting the operation mode of the instruction means to either one of a first mode for performing an inquiry by the inquiring means and a second mode for instructing the external device to automatically prohibit the display of image data from the other information processing apparatus without an inquiry to said user of the information processing apparatus.

14. An information processing apparatus according to claim 11, further comprising:

means for storing information for identifying the other information processing apparatus designated by the interrupt request whenever the interrupt request is received by the receiving means;

means for displaying the list of the stored identifying information on a display of the information processing apparatus; and

means for selecting one identifying information from the list as the next display source.

15. An information processing apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the instruction means includes means for transmitting to the external device the information to allow shifting the source of the image data to correspond to the selected next display source.

16. A method for controlling the display of image data transmitted from an information processing apparatus to an external device which displays received image data, comprising the steps of:

transmitting image data displayed by the external device to the external device;

receiving an interrupt request from the external device during the external device is displaying the received image data from the information processing apparatus, the

interrupt request indicating that the external device received an image-data presentation request from another information processing apparatus; and

in response to the interrupt request, instructing the external device whether or not to allow display of image data from the other information processing apparatus..

17. A method for controlling the transmission of image data according to claim 16, further including, in response to the interrupt request, inquiring of the user of the information processing apparatus about whether or not to allow display of image data from the other information processing apparatus before instructing the external device whether or not to allow display of image data from the other information processing apparatus.

18. A method for controlling the transmission of image data according to claim 17, further comprising the step of setting the operation mode of the instruction step to either one of a first mode for performing an inquiry of the inquiring step and a second mode for instructing the external device to automatically prohibit the display of image data from the other information processing apparatus without an inquiry to said user of the information processing apparatus.

19. A method for controlling the transmission of image data according to claim 16, further comprising the steps of:

storing information for identifying the other information processing apparatus designated by the interrupt request whenever the interrupt request is received in the receiving step;

displaying the list of the stored identifying information on the display of the information processing apparatus; and

selecting one identifying information from the list as the next display source.

20. A method for controlling the transmission of image data according to claim 19, wherein the instructing step includes the step of transmitting the information instructing the shifting the display source and the selected identifying information to the external

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**device, when the one identifying information is selected in the selecting step.**